



P621
1912

Stah has wrapped
fine 2nd round
May 1913

RIPOSTES OF
EZRA POUND

BOOKS BY THE
SAME AUTHOR

POEMS

PERSONAL
EXULTATIONS
CANZONI

PROSE

THE SPIRIT OF ROMANCE

RIPOSTES OF EZRA POUND

WHERE TO ARE APPENDED
THE COMPLETE POETICAL
WORKS OF
T. E. HULME
WITH PREFATORY NOTE



MCMXII
STEPHEN SWIFT AND CO., LTD.
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LONDON

Gird on thy star, We'll have this out with fate.

TO
WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS



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RIPOSTES

SILET

WHEN I behold how black, im-
mortal ink

Drips from my deathless pen—
ah, well-away !

Why should we stop at all for what I
think ?

There is enough in what I chance to say.

It is enough that we once came together ;
What is the use of setting it to rime ?

When it is autumn do we get spring
weather,

Or gather may of harsh northwindish
time ?

It is enough that we once came together ;
What if the wind have turned against the
rain ?

It is enough that we once came together ;
Time has seen this, and will not turn
again ;

And who are we, who know that last
intent,
To plague to-morrow with a testament !

IN EXITUM CUIUSDAM

On a certain one's departure

“**T**IME’S bitter flood ” ! Oh, that’s
all very well,
But where’s the old friend hasn’t
fallen off,
Or slacked his hand-grip when you first
gripped fame ?

I know your circle and can fairly tell
What you have kept and what you’ve left
behind :

I know my circle and know very well
How many faces I’d have out of mind.

APPARUIT

GOLDEN rose the house, in the
portal I saw
thee, a marvel, carven in subtle
stuff, a
portent. Life died down in the lamp and
flickered,
caught at the wonder.

Crimson, frosty with dew, the roses bend
where
thou afar moving in the glamorous sun
drinkst in life of earth, of the air, the
tissue
golden about thee.

Green the ways, the breath of the fields
is thine there,
open lies the land, yet the steely going
darkly hast thou dared and the dreaded
æther
parted before thee.

Swift at courage thou in the shell of gold,
cast-
ing a-loose the cloak of the body, camest
straight, then shone thine oriel and the
stunned light
faded about thee.

Half the graven shoulder, the throat
aflash with
strands of light inwoven about it, loveliest
of all things, frail alabaster, ah me !
swift in departing,

Clothed in goldish weft, delicately perfect,
gone as wind ! The cloth of the magical
hands !
Thou a slight thing, thou in access of
cunning
dar'dst to assume this ?

THE TOMB AT AKR ÇAAR

“**I** AM thy soul, Nikoptis. I have
watched

These five millennia, and thy dead
eyes

Moved not, nor ever answer my desire,
And thy light limbs, wherethrough I
leapt aflame,

Burn not with me nor any saffron thing.

See, the light grass sprang up to pillow
thee,

And kissed thee with a myriad grassy
tongues ;

But not thou me.

I have read out the gold upon the
wall,

And wearied out my thought upon the
signs.

And there is no new thing in all this
place.

I have been kind. See, I have left the
jars sealed,
Lest thou shouldst wake and whimper
for thy wine.
And all thy robes I have kept smooth on
thee.

O thou unmindful ! How should I forget !
—Even the river many days ago,
The river, thou wast over young.
And three souls came upon Thee—

And I came.
And I flowed in upon thee, beat them off ;
I have been intimate with thee, known
thy ways.

Have I not touched thy palms and
finger-tips,
Flowed in, and through thee and about
thy heels ?

How 'came I in' ? Was I not thee
and Thee ?

And no sun comes to rest me in this place,
And I am torn against the jagged dark,

And no light beats upon me, and you say
No word, day after day.

Oh ! I could get me out, despite the marks
And all their crafty work upon the door,
Out through the glass-green fields. . . .

.

Yet it is quiet here :
I do not go."

PORTRAIT D'UNE FEMME

YOUR mind and you are our Sargasso
Sea,

London has swept about you this
score years

And bright ships left you this or that in fee:
Ideas, old gossip, oddments of all things,
Strange spars of knowledge and dimmed
wares of price.

Great minds have sought you—lacking
someone else.

You have been second always. Tragical?
No. You preferred it to the usual thing:
One dull man, dulling and uxorious,
One average mind—with one thought less,
each year.

Oh, you are patient, I have seen you
sit

Hours, where something might have
floated up.

And now you pay one. Yes, you richly
pay.

You are a person of some interest, one
comes to you
And takes strange gain away :
Trophies fished up ; some curious sugges-
tion ;
Fact that leads nowhere ; and a tale for
two,
Pregnant with mandrakes, or with some-
thing else
That might prove useful and yet never
proves,
That never fits a corner or shows
use,
Or finds its hour upon the loom of
days :
The tarnished, gaudy, wonderful old
work ;
Idols and ambergris and rare inlays,
These are your riches, your great store ;
and yet
For all this sea-hoard of deciduous
things,
Strange woods half sodden, and new
brighter stuff :

In the slow float of differing light and
deep,

No! there is nothing! In the whole
and all,

Nothing that's quite your own.

Yet this is you.

N.Y.

M^Y City, my beloved, my white !
Ah, slender,
Listen ! Listen to me, and I
will breathe into thee a soul.
Delicately upon the reed, attend me !

*Now do I know that I am mad,
For here are a million people surly with
traffic ;
This is no maid.
Neither could I play upon any reed if I had
one.*

My City, my beloved,
Thou art a maid with no breasts,
Thou art slender as a silver reed.
Listen to me, attend me !
And I will breathe into thee a soul,
And thou shalt live for ever.

A GIRL

THE tree has entered my hands,
The sap has ascended my arms,
The tree has grown in my breast—
Downward,
The branches grow out of me, like arms.

Tree you are,
Moss you are,
You are violets with wind above them.
A child—so high—you are,
And all this is folly to the world.

“ PHASELLUS ILLE ”

THIS *papier-mâché*, which you see,
my friends,

Saith 'twas the worthiest of editors.
Its mind was made up in “ the seventies,”
Nor hath it ever since changed that concoction.

It works to represent that school of thought
Which brought the hair-cloth chair to such
perfection,

Nor will the horrid threats of Bernard Shaw
Shake up the stagnant pool of its convictions ;

Nay, should the deathless voice of all the
world

Speak once again for its sole stimulation,
'Twould not move it one jot from left to
right.

Come Beauty barefoot from the Cyclades,
She'd find a model for St Anthony
In this thing's sure *decorum* and behaviour.

AN OBJECT

THIS thing, that hath a code and
not a core,
Hath set acquaintance where
might be affections,
And nothing now
Disturbeth his reflections.

QUIES

THIS is another of our ancient loves.
Pass and be silent, Rullus, for
the day

Hath lacked a something since this
lady passed ;

Hath lacked a something. 'Twas but
marginal.

THE SEAFARER

(From the early Anglo-Saxon text)

MAY I for my own self song's truth
reckon,
Journey's jargon, how I in harsh
days

Hardship endured oft.

Bitter breast-cares have I abided,

Known on my keel many a care's hold,

And dire sea-surge, and there I oft
spent

Narrow nightwatch nigh the ship's head

While she tossed close to cliffs. Coldly
afflicted,

My feet were by frost benumbed.

Chill its chains are ; chafing sighs

Hew my heart round and hunger begot

Mere-weary mood. Lest man know not

That he on dry land loveliest liveth,

List how I, care-wretched, on ice-cold sea,

Weathered the winter, wretched outcast

Deprived of my kinsmen ;

Hung with hard ice-flakes, where hail-
scur flew,

There I heard naught save the harsh sea
And ice-cold wave, at whiles the swan
cries,

Did for my games the gannet's clamour,
Sea-fowls' loudness was for me laughter,
The mews' singing all my mead-drink.

Storms, on the stone-cliffs beaten, fell on
the stern

In icy feathers ; full oft the eagle screamed
With spray on his pinion.

Not any protector
May make merry man faring needy.

This he little believes, who aye in win-
some life

Abides 'mid burghers some heavy busi-
ness,

Wealthy and wine-flushed, how I weary
oft

Must bide above brine.

Neareth nightshade, snoweth from north,
Frost froze the land, hail fell on earth
then

Corn of the coldest. Nathless there
 knocketh now
The heart's thought that I on high
 streams
The salt-wavy tumult traverse alone.
Moaneth alway my mind's lust
That I fare forth, that I afar hence
Seek out a foreign fastness.
For this there's no mood-lofty man over
 earth's midst,
Not though he be given his good, but will
 have in his youth greed ;
Nor his deed to the daring, nor his king to
 the faithful
But shall have his sorrow for sea-fare
Whatever his lord will.
He hath not heart for harping, nor in ring-
 having
Nor winsomeness to wife, nor world's
 delight
Nor any whit else save the wave's
 slash,
Yet longing comes upon him to fare forth
 on the water.

Bosque taketh blossom, cometh beauty
of berries,
Fields to fairness, land fares brisker,
All this admonisheth man eager of mood,
The heart turns to travel so that he then
thinks
On flood-ways to be far departing.
Cuckoo calleth with gloomy crying,
He singeth summerward, bodeth sorrow,
The bitter heart's blood. Burgher knows
not—
He the prosperous man—what some perform
Where wandering them widest draweth.
So that but now my heart burst from my
breast-lock,
My mood 'mid the mere-flood,
Over the whale's acre, would wander wide.
On earth's shelter cometh oft to me,
Eager and ready, the crying lone-flyer,
Whets for the whale-path the heart
irresistibly,
O'er tracks of ocean ; seeing that anyhow
My lord deems to me this dead life

On loan and on land, I believe not
That any earth-weal eternal standeth
Save there be somewhat calamitous
That, ere a man's tide go, turn it to twain.
Disease or oldness or sword-hate
Beats out the breath from doom-gripped
body.

And for this, every earl whatever, for those
speaking after—

Laud of the living, boasteth some last
word,

That he will work ere he pass onward,
Frame on the fair earth 'gainst foes his
malice,

Daring ado, . . .

So that all men shall honour him after
And his laud beyond them remain 'mid the
English,

Aye, for ever, a lasting life's-blast,
Delight mid the doughty.

Days little durable,
And all arrogance of earthen riches,
There come now no kings nor Cæsars
Nor gold-giving lords like those gone.

Howe'er in mirth most magnified,
Whoe'er lived in life most lordliest,
Drear all this excellence, delights un-
durable !

Waneth the watch, but the world holdeth.
Tomb hideth trouble. The blade is layed
low.

Earthly glory ageth and seareth.
No man at all going the earth's gait,
But age fares against him, his face paleth,
Grey-haired he groaneth, knows gone
companions,

Lordly men are to earth o'ergiven,
Nor may he then the flesh-cover, whose
life ceaseth,

Nor eat the sweet nor feel the sorry,
Nor stir hand nor think in mid heart,
And though he strew the grave with gold,
His born brothers, their buried bodies
Be an unlikely treasure hoard.

ECHOES

I

GUIDO ORLANDO, SINGING

BEFITS me praise thine empery,
Lady of Valour,
Past all disproving ;
Thou art the flower to me—
Nay, by Love's pallor—
Of all good loving.

Worthy to reap men's praises
Is he who'd gaze upon
Truth's mazes.
In like commend is he,
Who, loving fixedly,
Love so refineth,

Till thou alone art she
In whom love's vested ;
As branch hath fairest flower
Where fruit's suggested.

This great joy comes to me,
To me observing
How swiftly thou hast power
To pay my serving.

ECHOES

II *

THOU keep'st thy rose-leaf
Till the rose-time will be over,
Think'st thou that Death will
kiss thee ?

Think'st thou that the Dark House
Will find thee such a lover
As I ? Will the new roses miss thee ?

Prefer my cloak unto the cloak of dust
'Neath which the last year lies,
For thou shouldst more mistrust
Time than my eyes.

* Asclepiades, Julianus Ægyptus.

AN IMMORALITY

SING we for love and idleness,
Naught else is worth the having.

Though I have been in many a land,
There is naught else in living.

And I would rather have my sweet,
Though rose-leaves die of grieving,

| Than do high deeds in Hungary
| To pass all men's believing.

DIEU ! QU'IL LA FAIT

*From Charles D'Orleans
For music*

GOD ! that mad'st her well regard
her,

How she is so fair and bonny ;
For the great charms that are upon her
Ready are all folk to reward her.

Who could part him from her borders
When spells are alway renewed on her ?
God ! that mad'st her well regard her,
How she is so fair and bonny.

From here to there to the sea's border,
Dame nor damsel there's not any
Hath of perfect charms so many.
Thoughts of her are of dream's order :
God ! that mad'st her well regard her.

SALVE PONTIFEX

(A. C. S.)

ONE after one they leave thee,
High Priest of Iacchus,
Intoning thy melodies as winds
intone

The whisperings of leaves on sunlit days.
And the sands are many
And the seas beyond the sands are one
In ultimate, so we here being many
Are unity ; nathless thy compeers,
Knowing thy melody,
Lulled with the wine of thy music
Go seaward silently, leaving thee sentinel
O'er all the mysteries,

High Priest of Iacchus.
For the lines of life lie under thy fingers,
And above the vari-coloured strands
Thine eyes look out unto the infinitude
Of the blue waves of heaven,
And even as Triplex Sisterhood
Thou fingerest the threads knowing neither

Cause nor the ending,

High Priest of Iacchus,
Draw'st forth a multiplicity
Of strands, and, beholding
The colour thereof, raisest thy voice
Towards the sunset,

O High Priest of Iacchus !

And out of the secrets of the inmost
mysteries

Thou chantest strange far-sourcèd canticles :

O High Priest of Iacchus !

Life and the ways of Death her
Twin-born sister, that is life's counterpart,

And of night and the winds of night ;
Silent voices ministering to the souls
Of hamadryads that hold council concealed

In streams and tree-shadowing
Forests on hill slopes,

O High Priest of Iacchus,
All the manifold mystery
Thou makest a wine of song,

And maddest thy following even
With visions of great deeds
And their futility,

O High Priest of Iacchus !
Though thy co-novices are bent to the
scythe
Of the magian wind that is voice of Perse-
phone,
Leaving thee solitary, master of initiating
Mænads that come through the
Vine-entangled ways of the forest
Seeking, out of all the world,
Madness of Iacchus,
That being skilled in the secrets of the
double cup
They might turn the dead of the world
Into pæans,

O High Priest of Iacchus,
Wreathed with the glory of thy years of
creating
Entangled music,
Breathe !
Now that the evening cometh upon
thee,

Breathe upon us, that low-bowed and
exultant

Drink wine of Iacchus, that since the
conquering

Hath been chiefly containèd in the
numbers

Of them that, even as thou, have woven
Wicker baskets for grape clusters

Wherein is concealèd the source of the
vintage,

O High Priest of Iacchus,
Breathe thou upon us

Thy magic in parting !

Even as they thy co-novices,

At being mingled with the sea,

While yet thou madest thy canticles

Serving upright before the altar

That is bound about with shadows

Of dead years wherein thy Iacchus

Looked not upon the hills, that being

Uncared for, praised not him in entirety.

O High Priest of Iacchus,
Being now near to the border of the
sands

Where the sapphire girdle of the sea
 Encinctureth the maiden
Persephone, released for the spring,
Look ! Breathe upon us
The wonder of the thrice encinctured
 mystery
Whereby thou being full of years art
 young,
Loving even this lithe Persephone
That is free for the seasons of plenty ;
Whereby thou being young art old
And shalt stand before this Persephone
 Whom thou lovest,
In darkness, even at that time
That she being returned to her hus-
 band
Shall be queen and a maiden no longer,
Wherein thou being neither old nor
 young
Standing on the verge of the sea
Shalt pass from being sand,
 O High Priest of Iacchus,
And becoming wave
 Shalt encircle all sands,

Being transmuted through all
The girdling of the sea.

O High Priest of Iacchus,
Breathe thou upon us !

Note.—This apostrophe was written three years
before Swinburne's death.

Doris mother of the Nereides

Δώρια

BE in me as the eternal moods
of the bleak wind, and not
As transient things are—
gaiety of flowers.

Have me in the strong loneliness
of sunless cliffs

And of grey waters.

Let the gods speak softly of us
In days hereafter,

The shadowy flowers of Orcus
Remember Thee.

THE NEEDLE

COME, or the stellar tide will slip
away.

Eastward avoid the hour of its
decline,

Now ! for the needle trembles in my
soul !

Here have we had our vantage, the good
hour.

Here we have had our day, your day and
mine.

Come now, before this power
That bears us up, shall turn against the
pole.

Mock not the flood of stars, the thing's
to be.

O Love, come now, this land turns evil
slowly.

The waves bore in, soon will they bear
away.

The treasure is ours, make we fast land
with it.

Move we and take the tide, with its next
favour,

Abide

Under some neutral force

Until this course turneth aside.

SUB MARE

IT is, and is not, I am sane enough,
Since you have come this place has
 hovered round me,
This fábrication built of autumn roses,
Then there's a goldish colour, different.

And one gropes in these things as delicate
Algæ reach up and out beneath
Pale slow green surgings of the under-
 wave,
'Mid these things older than the names
 they have,
These things that are familiars of the god.

PLUNGE

I WOULD bathe myself in strangeness :
These comforts heaped upon me,
smother me !

I burn, I scald so for the new,
New friends, new faces,
Places !
Oh to be out of this,
This that is all I wanted
—save the new.

And you,
Love, you the much, the more de-
sired !

Do I not loathe all walls, streets,
stones,

All mire, mist, all fog,
All ways of traffic ?

You, I would have flow over me like
water,

Oh, but far out of this !
Grass, and low fields, and hills,
And sun,

Oh, sun enough !
Out and alone, among some
Alien people !

A VIRGINAL

NO, no ! Go from me. I have left
her lately.

I will not spoil my sheath with
lesser brightness,

For my surrounding air has a new light-
ness ;

Slight are her arms, yet they have bound
me straitly

And left me cloaked as with a gauze of
æther ;

As with sweet leaves ; as with a subtle
clearness.

Oh, I have picked up magic in her near-
ness

To sheathe me half in half the things that
sheathe her.

No, no ! Go from me. I have still the
flavour,

Soft as spring wind that's come from
birchen bowers.

Green come the shoots, aye April in the
branches,
As winter's wound with her sleight hand
she staunches,
Hath of the tress a likeness of the savour :
As white their bark, so white this lady's
hours.

PAN IS DEAD

PAN is dead. Great Pan is dead.
Ah ! bow your heads, ye maidens
all,
And weave ye him his coronal.

There is no summer in the leaves,
And withered are the sedges ;
How shall we weave a coronal,
Or gather floral pledges ?

That I may not say, Ladies.
Death was ever a churl.
That I may not say, Ladies.
How should he show a reason,
That he has taken our Lord away
Upon such hollow season ?

THE PICTURE *

THE eyes of this dead lady speak to
me,
For here was love, was not to be
drowned out,
And here desire, not to be kissed away.

The eyes of this dead lady speak to me.

* "Venus Reclining," by Jacopo del Sellaio
(1442-93).

OF JACOPO DEL SELLAIO

THIS man knew out the secret ways
of love,
No man could paint such things
who did not know.

And now she's gone, who was his Cyprian,
And you are here, who are "The Isles"
to me.

And here's the thing that lasts the whole
thing out :
The eyes of this dead lady speak to me.

THE RETURN

SEE, they return ; ah, see the tentative
Movements, and the slow feet,
The trouble in the pace and the
uncertain
Wavering !

See, they return, one, and by one,
With fear, as half-awakened ;
As if the snow should hesitate
And murmur in the wind,
and half turn back ;
These were the “ Wing’d-with-Awe,”
Inviolable.

Gods of the wingèd shoe !
With them the silver hounds,
sniffing the trace of air !

Haie ! Haie !
These were the swift to harry ;

These the keen-scented ;
These were the souls of blood.

Slow on the leash,
pallid the leash-men !

EFFECTS OF MUSIC UPON A COMPANY OF PEOPLE

I

DEUX MOVEMENTS

1. Temple qui fut.
2. Poissons d'or.

I

A SOUL curls back,
Their souls like petals,
Thin, long, spiral,
Like those of a chrysanthemum curl
Smoke-like up and back from the
Vavicel, the calyx,
Pale green, pale gold, transparent,
Green of plasma, rose-white,
Spirate like smoke,
Curled,
Vibrating,
Slowly, waving slowly.

O Flower animate !
O calyx !
O crowd of foolish people !

2

The petals !
On the tip of each the figure
Delicate.
See, they dance, step to step.
Flora to festival,
Twine, bend, bow,
Frolic involve ye.
Woven the step,
Woven the tread, the moving.
Ribands they move,
Wave, bow to the centre.
Pause, rise, deepen in colour,
And fold in drowsily.

II

FROM A THING BY SCHUMANN

BREAST high, floating and welling
Their soul, moving beneath the satin,
Plied the gold threads,
Pushed at the gauze above it.
The notes beat upon this,
Beat and indented it ;
Rain dropped and came and fell upon this,
Hail and snow,
My sight gone in the flurry !

And then across the white silken,
Bellied up, as a sail bellies to the wind,
Over the fluid tenuous, diaphanous,
Over this curled a wave, greenish,
Mounted and overwhelmed it.
This membrane floating above,
And bellied out by the up-pressing soul.

Then came a mer-host,
And after them legion of Romans,
The usual, dull, theatrical !

THE COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS OF T. E. HULME

PREFATORY NOTE

IN publishing his *Complete Poetical Works* at thirty,* Mr Hulme has set an enviable example to many of his contemporaries who have had less to say.

They are reprinted here for good fellowship ; for good custom, a custom out of Tuscany and of Provence ; and thirdly, for convenience, seeing their smallness of bulk ; and for good memory, seeing that they recall certain evenings and meetings of two years gone, dull enough at the time, but rather pleasant to look back upon.

* Mr Pound has grossly exaggerated my age.—
T. E. H.

As for the "School of Images," which may or may not have existed, its principles were not so interesting as those of the "inherent dynamists" or of *Les Unanimités*, yet they were probably sounder than those of a certain French school which attempted to dispense with verbs altogether; or of the Impressionists who brought forth:

"Pink pigs blossoming upon the hillside";

or of the Post-Impressionists who beseech their ladies to let down slate-blue hair over their raspberry-coloured flanks.

Ardoise rimed richly—ah, richly and rarely rimed!—with *framboise*.

As for the future, *Les Imagistes*, the descendants of the forgotten school of 1909, have that in their keeping.

I refrain from publishing my proposed *Historical Memoir* of their forerunners, because Mr Hulme has threatened to print the original propaganda.

E. P.

AUTUMN

A TOUCH of cold in the Autumn
night—

I walked abroad,
And saw the ruddy moon lean over a
hedge

Like a red-faced farmer.

I did not stop to speak, but nodded,
And round about were the wistful stars
With white faces like town children.

MANA ABODA

Beauty is the marking-time, the stationary vibration, the feigned ecstasy of an arrested impulse unable to reach its natural end.

MANA ABODA, whose bent form
The sky in archèd circle is,
Seems ever for an unknown grief
to mourn.

Yet on a day I heard her cry :

“ I weary of the roses and the singing
poets—

Josephs all, not tall enough to try.”

ABOVE THE DOCK

ABOVE the quiet dock in mid night,
Tangled in the tall mast's corded
height,
Hangs the moon. What seemed so far
away
Is but a child's balloon, forgotten after
play.

THE EMBANKMENT

(The fantasia of a fallen gentleman on a
cold, bitter night.)

ONCE, in finesse of fiddles found I
ecstasy,
In the flash of gold heels on the
hard pavement.

Now see I

That warmth's the very stuff of poesy.

Oh, God, make small

The old star-eaten blanket of the sky,

That I may fold it round me and in
comfort lie.

CONVERSION

LIGHTHEARTED I walked into the
valley wood
In the time of hyacinths,
Till beauty like a scented cloth
Cast over, stifled me. I was bound
Motionless and faint of breath
By loveliness that is her own eunuch.

Now pass I to the final river
Ignominiously, in a sack, without sound,
As any peeping Turk to the Bosphorus.

FINIS



1912

Mr. Ezra Pound leapt into fame with "Personae" and "Exultations." More recently he has been translating and expounding the Troubadours; but in this stimulating volume he reappears as a writer of poems as beautiful, thoughtful and provocative as any he has produced. Appended are poems by Mr. T. E. Hulme, the metaphysician, who achieves great rhythmical beauty in curious verse-forms.

STEPHEN SWIFT

Pat

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Ripostes

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